

## Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Establish a “GI Bill” for Children

*June 25, 1992*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Forty-eight years ago this week, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the GI Bill. With the hope of duplicating the success of that historic legislation, I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the “Federal Grants for State and Local ‘GI Bills’ for Children.” This proposal is a crucial component of our efforts to help the country achieve the National Education Goals by the year 2000. Also transmitted is a section-by-section analysis.

This legislation would authorize half-a-billion new Federal dollars in fiscal year 1993, and additional amounts in later years, to help States and communities give \$1,000 scholarships to middle- and low-income children. Families may spend these scholarships at any lawfully operating school of their choice—public, private, or religious. The result would be to give middle- and low-income families consumer power—dollars to spend at any school they choose. This is the muscle parents need to transform our education system and create the best schools in the world for all our children.

At the close of World War II, the Federal Government created the GI Bill giving veterans scholarships to use at any college of their choice—public, private, or religious. This consumer power gave veterans opportunity, helped to create the best system of colleges and universities in the world, and gave America a new generation of leaders. Now that the Cold War is over, the Federal Government should help State and local governments create GI Bills for children. Under this approach, scholarships would be available for middle- and low-income parents to use at the elementary or secondary school of their choice.

This bill will give middle- and low-income families more of the same choices available to wealthier families. Through families, it will provide new funds at the school site that teachers and principals can use to help all children achieve the high educational standards called for by the National Edu-

cation Goals. In addition, the legislation will create a marketplace of educational opportunities to help improve all schools; engage parents in their children’s schooling; and encourage creation of other academic programs for children before and after school, on weekends, or during school vacations.

Once this proposal is enacted, any State or locality can apply for enough Federal funds to give each child of a middle- or low-income family a \$1,000 annual scholarship. The governmental unit would have to take significant steps to provide a choice of schools to families with school children in the area and permit families to spend the \$1,000 Federal scholarships at a wide variety of public and private schools. It would have to allow all lawfully operating schools in the area—public, private, and religious—to participate if they choose.

The Secretary of Education would select grantees on the basis of: (1) the number and variety of choices made available to families; (2) the extent to which the applicant has provided educational choices to all children, including children who are not eligible for scholarships; (3) the proportion of children who will participate who are from low-income families; and (4) the applicant’s financial support (including private support) for the project.

The maximum family income for eligible children would be determined by the grantee, but it could not exceed the higher of the State or national median income, adjusted for family size. All eligible children in the project area would receive scholarships, as long as sufficient funds are available. If all eligible children cannot participate, the grantee would provide scholarships to those with the lowest family incomes. Students would continue to receive scholarships over the 4-year life of a project unless they leave school, move out of the area, or no longer meet the income criteria. Up to \$500 of each scholarship may be used for other academic programs for children before and after school, on weekends, or during school

vacations.

This bill provides aid to families, not institutions. However, as a condition of participating in this program, a school must comply with Federal anti-discrimination provisions of: section 601 of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race), section 901 of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (gender), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability).

Funding is authorized at \$500 million in FY 1993, and "such sums as may be necessary" through FY 2000. The Department

of Education would conduct a comprehensive evaluation of these demonstration projects. The evaluation would assess the impact of the program in such areas as educational achievement and parents' involvement in, and satisfaction with, their children's education.

I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,  
June 25, 1992.

## Remarks on the Railroad Strike and an Exchange With Reporters

June 25, 1992

*The President.* Let me just simply say that we're now in the second day of a national rail strike. And Secretary Card and his associates and others have worked all night, working with a bipartisan group on Capitol Hill to get the legislation to stop this strike. The trains are not moving as of this minute, however. Clearly the national interest is at stake here. We now face a complete halt of passenger and commuter rail lines. I urge the House and Senate to act to end this strike today; the national interest requires no less. There must be no further delay.

So I salute the Secretary and his people at the Department of Transportation, those Members that are working to end this strike. But it must happen, and it should happen today.

Q. What is the holdup?

*The President.* Well, Andy can give you more detail, but there's a difference of opinion amongst some of the Senators, I mean, some of the House Members and Senators. But the point is, no finger pointing here, I just want to use this office to encourage the Congress to move and move fast and settle this matter once and for all. I believe they can do it. In fact, I think they should do it.

Q. Well, is there something happening today that you know of?

*The President.* Well, talking's still going on on the legislation, yes.

Q. Mr. President, are you amenable to a 30-day cooling-off period and the appointment of—

*The President.* Look, we want that matter resolved once and for all. And that's what the administration position is—

Q. Mr. President, did you make a mistake the other day—

*The President.* —that's in the best interest of the American people.

### *Perot Investigations*

Q. Mr. President, did you make a mistake the other day when you criticized Ross Perot in an indirect fashion concerning the possible—

*The President.* I'm not taking any questions on that here, Jim [Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News]. Thank you very much. Nice try.

Q. Well, did you write a very amenable, friendly letter to him?

*The President.* Yes, I certainly did.

Q. Why, if he investigated your children?

*The President.* Well, go look at the dates, is the only thing I can suggest.

Q. But do you think he did investigate your kids?

*The President.* I don't know, Rita [Rita Beamish, Associated Press]. And I'm not going to take any more questions on it.

Q. Do you know anything about Republican dirty tricks?